Alyssa Fratoni <afratoni@colchesterct.org>

[BOE] Statement for Public Comment – Board of Education Meeting, September 9, 2025

1 message

Rayna Dunham [redacted] Mon, Sep 1, 2025 at 6:50 AM
To: BOE@colchesterct.org, dsullivan@colchesterct.org
Cc: jomeara@colchesterct.org

Good morning,

I kindly ask that this email be read for public comment at the upcoming Board of Education meeting on September 9th. If this is not possible, please let me know, and I will plan to attend next month to share it myself. I will have both of my children with me on September 9th and will not have childcare.

I would like to publicly recognize the amazing work occurring at the elementary school. My child recently began Pre-K, and what could have been an uncertain and anxious transition was made smooth and reassuring because of the preparation, frontloading, and kindness shown by the staff and administration.

Last spring, my child participated in the screening process, where we received helpful feedback on what to practice at home along with reassuring guidance from the teachers. We also attended the book reading series at the library, where teachers volunteered their time to connect with students and introduce them to new books. It was especially inspiring to see the dynamic of a more experienced teacher with Colchester Public Schools mentoring a new colleague in such a kind and supportive way.

We then participated in the orientation and Meet and Greet, which helped us understand the school's routines, schedules, and expectations. A highlight for me was the "Handle with Care" note included in the folder—it truly demonstrated how deeply the school cares for its community. Another detail that stood out was the encouraging Post-it notes placed on lockers, a simple but powerful gesture that made students and families alike feel seen, welcomed, and uplifted.

I want to thank Ms. Boyd, Ms. Kroc, and Ms. Wheeler for their kindness, care, and preparation, as well as the entire staff who worked so hard to create a welcoming start for students. I am especially grateful to Principal Ms. O'Meara and Assistant Principal Ms. Bahre for cultivating such a positive culture and climate within the school. Their leadership is clearly felt by students and families and has made a tremendous difference in ensuring that children feel safe, supported, and excited to learn.

As a parent with one child just starting Pre-K, I deeply appreciate every detail that went into preparing families for this moment. From the communication to the personal touches, nothing went unnoticed. Most importantly, the greatest gift has been hearing my child say that they enjoy school.

In education, teachers often do not hear "thank you" or see the full impact of their work until years later. I want to acknowledge that impact now. Just one teacher can change the trajectory of a child's life, inspire them, push them, and help them unlock passions they never knew existed. The teachers—and the leadership team—are already making that difference for my child before the first day even began.

Thank you to the Board of Education for supporting the staff who make this kind of thoughtful, intentional work possible.

Sincerely,

Rayna Northcutt